



KEVIN (RASHID) JOHNSON

LAWRENCE ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS NEWSLETTER

The Abolitionist

Iraq and the 'Hood

The hit song *My Block* by platinum-selling rap artist Searface (Brad Jordan) explains that in his 'hood, "it's like the world doesn't exist, we stay confined to this small lil section we livin' in." (1) That statement, for the most part, can be applied to any 'hood within the United States, whether it be the barrios of East Los Angeles, the ghettos of Houston, or the projects of New York. I use the term 'hood meaning: any neighborhood in which the majority of people who live there are struggling to get by. The sad fact is many living in such communities can go their entire lives without ever venturing outside their neighborhood or area of town. So why should someone living in the 'hood care about the United States going to war in Iraq? What does Iraq have to do with the 'hood?

The cost of a war in Iraq has been estimated between \$150 billion to \$950 billion. I'll use a conservative estimate of \$275 billion. Let's put that number into perspective: \$275 billion is enough money to put \$1,000 in the pockets of every man, woman, and child in the United States. (2) How many single mothers with three children and working two jobs to survive could use \$4,000? Children and adults alike are starving; there are millions of homeless and semi-homeless persons and millions living below or near the poverty line. \$1,000 each could definitely relieve some of their suffering. The majority of Americans live check by check or are close to living that way. \$1,000 could definitely put them on their feet. And for those who are not struggling, wouldn't it be nice to have an extra thousand dollars in your pocket?

We must remember that within his first four months of office, Bush cut \$39 million from federal spending on libraries, slashed funding for the Boys and Girls Clubs of America in public housing by \$60 million, and cut \$200 million each from the Childcare and Development grant and the Workforce Training Program for dislocated workers. He also cut \$700 million from public housing repair funds, reduced the much needed federal funding for community health care for the uninsured by an astounding 86% and cut \$15.7 million from programs dealing with child abuse and neglect. (3) That's just the tip of the iceberg.

As we have seen, the Bush Oligarchy has systematically launched an all out assault campaign on social programs. Essentially, they have launched a direct attack on the 'hood. \$275 billion can easily revitalize all of the aforementioned programs and create many more. But the White House doesn't care about libraries; they don't want poor people to learn and God forbid be smart! Girls and Boys Clubs in the projects? Oh no, programs like that might keep kids off the streets and send them in the direction of becoming successful, socially-conscious citizens! Workforce training? But...but...that might enable people who cannot afford to buy and influence their way into Harvard and Yale (like George W. Bush) the opportunity to acquire training for a meaningful career! Other social programs? The White House warmongers couldn't care less about programs benefiting the poor. Millionaire politicians and their families don't care about what goes on in the 'hood. They don't live there and have never been there. (Well, to be fair, Lil Bush's niece, Noel Bush, may have been to the 'hood a few times to pick up some dope.)

The Washington war hawks want to spend *billions* of dollars to wage a completely unnecessary war. They want to spend *billions* of American's hard-earned tax dollars to secure *their*—the 1% of the United States population that makes \$300,000 or more a year—oil and business interests. 99% of Americans will not benefit at all if the U. S. military completes the proposed and aggravated robbery of Iraq's oil. Those in the 'hood will undoubtedly suffer. Minority and poor white soldiers will be the ones on the front lines commanded to destroy the livelihood of innocent Iraqis and devastate an already war-ravaged country. A war on Iraq will be just another case of using the poor to fight the poor so the rich can become richer and government oppression through foreign and domestic policy can increase.

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LABC Update

Lawrence Anarchist Black Cross Mission Statement

The Lawrence Anarchist Black Cross is a collective of anti-authoritarians dedicated to prison abolition and a revolutionary new egalitarian society based on mutual aid and cooperation. We focus on aiding and working with anarchist, class war, fight back, and political prisoners, but our work is not limited to these groups. We also reach out to and support social prisoners. We stand steadfast against all forms of oppression, are dedicated to the fight for a free society, and run or support campaigns in line with our vision.

abolitionist adj: someone who seeks to do away with certain institutions, particularly the institution of slavery.

anarchism n: the understanding that all forms of domination are unnecessary and detrimental to the well-being of humanity as well as other living things. The movement for voluntary egalitarian relationships in all aspects of existence, especially human society.

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DRUG USERS AND SELLERS: MOSTLY WHITE • DRUG PRISONERS: MOSTLY BLACK & HISPANIC

manity.

Looking at the emasculated Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib—from a distance—forced people in the U.S. to see war upfront. Most of us saw more than we wanted to: the U.S. 'war on terror' is ugly and debased; the war in Iraq is failing; we are no different than Saddam Hussein. Gender construction is always changing.

And with it war itself changes. Masculinity and femininity and their specific racialized meanings are then always in flux. Linda Burnham calls attention to the "sexualization of national conquest" at Abu Ghraib and sees sexual domination as part of a "militarist hyper-sexuality". This hypersexual moment is revealed because sexualized racism is always brought to the fore when systems of power are in crisis and too much of the truth of war is uncovered. Unilateral power is blinded by a complete and total arrogance. The Bush administration thinks it is above the law, out of reach of any kind of accountability. Torture is O.K. No one is innocent. There are no civilians. The U.S. military will police itself. It is its own court of last resort. There are no protections for prisoners.

The 'war on terror' is a terrorizing war for all who come in contact with it. The lines between combatant and civilian, rights and degradation, and white, black and brown men and women are realigned and remade. But this gender flux takes place within the structural constraints of racialized patriarchy, and masculinized gender. The naked bodies of tortured Muslim men alongside white women with cigarettes and leashes, and the absence and silencing of Muslim women at Abu Ghraib is a heart-rending reminder that war is obscene. It would be a double heart-break to think that people in this country abide any part of the violations at Abu Ghraib, especially in the name of feminism. I am hoping that the horrific pictorial exposure of torture at Abu Ghraib will recommit us all to struggle on behalf of an anti-racist feminist humanity inclusive of each and every one's liberation across the globe.

See *Against Empire, Feminisms, Racism, and the West* (London: Zed Press, U.S.: Palgrave, India: Kali), July, 2004 for a much fuller accounting of many of the ideas expressed here.

Eric Schmitt, "Military Women Reporting Rapes By U.S. Soldiers", New York Times, February 26, 2004, p. A1. Barbara Ehrenreich, "What Abu Ghraib Taught Me", www.alternet.org/story, May 20, 2004. Rick Bragg, *I Am A Soldier Too* (New

York: Alfred Knopf, 2003) Linda Burnham, "Sexual Domination in Uniform: An American Value" *War Times*, www.war-times.org, May 19, 2004.

Lawrence ABC Update

Due to a variety of factors, Lawrence ABC now has seven members in the collective.

The group supports over a dozen political and social prisoners across the country, as well as working on projects with other groups.

In the late winter and early spring, LABC worked on a campaign to defeat a proposal that would require Douglas County inmates to make co-payments in order to receive healthcare. In response to LABC encouragement, three local community groups wrote letters against the proposal and sent them to the Douglas County Commission. About 150 community members as well as people from other cities and states sent postcards designed by LABC to the Douglas County Commission to express opposition to the proposal.

On June 12 members of LABC organized events for the International Day of Solidarity with Jeff "Free" Luers, an eco-liberation prisoner in Oregon who was sentenced to 22 years in prison for starting a fire that burned three SUVs. About a dozen supporters attended a rally for Free in front of the Douglas County Courthouse, and LABC members showed the movie *Green With A Vengeance* (a *Duteline* Australia documentary about Free and the Earth Liberation Front) at the public library.

In July LABC co-sponsored and made financial contributions to the We Are Resisting conference held in Lawrence. Members of LABC organized and curated a prisoner art show in conjunction with the conference. The show included over 150 pieces in a variety of media created by prisoners from ten states. Approximately 250 people attended the opening night reception which included local musical group Lila and writer Regan Butcher reading poetry from his book *Stone Hotel*. Another 100 people visited the show during the week that it was open. Several artists sold pieces of their art.

Members of LABC worked with ARISE, an autonomous project started by prisoners in Missouri.

A working group from LABC produced issue #6 of *Off The Hook*, the newsletter of the Missouri Prison Labor Union. The working group will produce one more issue of the newsletter before handing it off to MPLU supporters in Kirksville, Missouri.

Four members of LABC attended the Prison Abolition Conference in Chicago in August.

THE 'HOOD, continued from front page

Former US Attorney General and son of a former Supreme Court Justice, Ramsey Clark, recently observed, "The United States is the greatest threat to peace and world stability." (4) If the United States goes to war in Iraq, then the United States itself will be the greatest threat to peace, financial stability and overall progress in the 'hood. Social programs will continue to vanish, the social programs that are left will have their funds diverted to pay for war and the poverty gap will continue to widen. In essence, a war on Iraq is a war on poor Iraqis and the poor oppressed people in the United States. Say NO to genocide for oil. Say NO to a war on the 'hood. Say NO to a war on Iraq!!

Rob Will #999402

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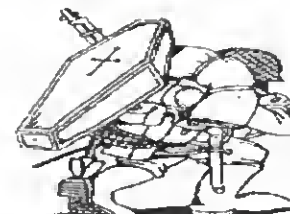
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Footnotes:

- (1) *My Block*, by Scarface, is on his newly released album, "The Fox" on Def Jam/Rap-a-Lot Records.
- (2) The National Geographic Society recently reported the total population of the United States at 275,600,000. See www.nationalgeographic.com
- (3) Michael Moore, *Stupid White Men* (New York, Harper Collins, 2001). See www.michaelmoore.com.
- (4) Ramsey Clark made this statement on the Pacifica news program Flashpoints, on 10-9-02. See www.flashpoints.net

The United States invaded Iraq on March 20, 2003.

As of September 29, 2004, 1041 U.S. soldiers, over 13,000 Iraqi civilians and thousands of Iraqi resistance fighters have been killed. More are dying everyday.



Friends of the ABC Network

Anarchist Prisoners Legal Aid Network
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Portland, OR 97204, USA

Break the Chains
P.O. Box 12122
Eugene, OR 97440

The Books 4 Prisoners Crew
P.O. Box 19065
Cincinnati, OH 45219

Free books to prisoners in Ohio, Indiana and 3 state prisons in Texas (Ramsey I, Gatesville, and Polunsky Units).

Greetings from the Ab Crew!

Due to a busy summer, we are late in getting out this issue of the newsletter. We decided to combine the summer and fall issues into one massive reading extravaganza! All opinions presented in this paper do not necessarily reflect those of the editors; however, we do feel that the ideas included here are important to consider. There will be changes within the Ab Crew and hopefully, as we become more experienced, *The Abolitionist* will become an even better forum for those incarcerated in the American gulags.

The war in Iraq will be the theme of issue #7. Please send poetry, artwork, essays, and rants for consideration in the next issue. We want much of *The Abolitionist* to consist of the work of its readers.

Prisons In The News

Prison reformers hope attention to Iraq abuses spurs changes at home

The Associated Press

Monday, May 17, 2004

The spotlight on abuse of detainees at a U.S. military prison in Iraq has spurred hopes that some attention will spill over to prisons stateside, where reformers say get-tough policies and public indifference have let longstanding problems fester.

There have been numerous examples over the years of guards misusing their authority over inmates. In the 1990s, Alabama officers used to routinely handcuff state prisoners to a metal post in the sun. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled it was unconstitutional. In Massachusetts, a jailor in 1993 poured boiling water on a child killer's genitals. There have been convictions for rape and assault, and allegations of worse.

Prison administrators say there have been sweeping improvements in recent decades, with widespread acceptance that abusive behavior is unacceptable and that proper procedures can minimize it.

Advocates for reform and former inmates, however, say a culture of violence persists and is made worse because of tacit acceptance by administrators, politicians and the public.

States' mandatory sentencing laws have helped drive the stunning rise in prison and jail populations in the past two decades — now at 2.1 million, a number that's nearly quadrupled since 1980.

A 1996 federal law that aimed to cut back so-called frivolous inmate lawsuits has also restricted access to legitimate claims of misconduct and poor prison conditions, advocates say.

"The system is out of control," said Elizabeth Alexander, who oversees the American Civil Liberties Union's National Prison Project. "In this sense, it's like Iraq. The more overcrowded you are, the more your budget doesn't match your needs, the more likely abuse is."

The pressures on prisons are also well-documented. Turnover among corrections officers averaged 15 percent in 2002, and in several states was over 30 percent, the American Correctional Assn. reports.

States and local governments have been slow to increase funding as the population behind bars rises — staff rose 24 percent from 1995 to 2000, while inmates in prisons, jails, boot camps and other facilities rose 28 percent, the ACA reported.

But prison administrators maintain that, despite the obstacles, significant improvements have been made.

"Look, there's abuses in school systems, there's abuses in the Catholic church," said James Gondles, executive director of the American Correctional Assn. "In the past 20 years, there's been a sea change in American corrections."

Prison officials recognize the potential for problems, he said. "You have almost absolute power over other individuals, and that is a system that could easily breed abuse."

The key steps are proper training, strong communications, opening prisons to scrutiny, full funding of programs, and making sure those that break rules are punished.

His group, along with a dozen more that represent prison and jail guards, teachers and administrators, issued a statement Friday calling the abuses in Iraq abhorrent and in no way reflective of practices in U.S. prisons and jails.

The impetus for the statement came from news that two soldiers charged in the Iraq prison scandal were guards in civilian life.

"If anybody is a professional corrections officer, and they're guilty of that abuse, they're not much of a professional," Gondles said.

"I am not proud of the fact that two or three of them worked full-time in corrections in the United States."

verse; don't ask don't tell is the rule of law here. These low ranking women are clearly not in control of much of anything; they are a type of pawn supporting disgusting practices that they should have refused to perform.

But their actions do not bespeak their own power or privilege yet they display the imperial power of white women over Muslim men. They are acting in a heterosexist hierarchical and punishing system of power. This same system of power now offers them up as cannon fodder. The complex web

of sex, race, gender and class is woven deceptively and yet with consequence at Abu Ghraib. It is truly significant that Fast and Karpinski are white and that we do not see Black women in these positions of command or implicated in sexual crimes like England. Because of the twisted effects of racialized sexuality Johnson has never been put in the position of gender decoy. It is not insignificant that people in the U.S.—men and women alike—were horrified to see women degrading prisoners at Abu Ghraib. Some of us even hoped that women were above this kind of action. Obviously, simple essentialism—that women are more mothering or caring or peaceful—is not simply true. Neither is it simply true that given many women's lives and their parental responsibilities that they are as prone to war as most men. Women and men respond to the forces upon them and are constructed from them.

Neither gender essentialism nor constructionism clarifies war. So, yes, Abu Ghraib bespeaks a larger problem than a few loose cannons deciding to abuse and torture prisoners. The obscene practices of human degradation were already in place in Afghanistan, and in our prisons at home. It has now been revealed that former prison guards with records of abuse, interrogators of detainees at Guantanamo, and officials from the Afghan war instructed the military

personnel at Abu Ghraib. It is not just about the role that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, Undersecretary of Defense and Intelligence Stephen Cambone and Commander of the detention center at Guantanamo Geoffrey Miller played.

It is also about the larger system of racialized masculinity that is put in high gear at this moment of unilateral militarization. This structural system of hierarchical privilege and power 'others' anyone who is not in the business of empire building.

There are few if any civilians left in these moments.

Gendered/racialized individuals are never what they simply seem. But gender is complicated. It makes it a perfect foil for obfuscation. When Kofi Annan says invest in the women in Africa and they will help solve the AIDS problem; when people depend on women in the U.S. to mobilize in terms of their disproportionate peace-making commitments; when women in Afghanistan and Iraq provide significant leadership for real democratic struggle AND when women are mobilized out of economic necessity to fight this 'war of/on terror' there is no easy clarification. Real commitments to gender equality will be used and abused by those in power.

Gender differentiation will be mobilized for war AND peace. This is the ugly side of the reified patriarchy of war-capitalism. Bush's 'war of/on terror' masks its realpolitik—that of a racist capitalist misogyny oper-

ating in drag for unilateral empire building. Abu Ghraib showed us that humanity and inhumanity comes in all colors and genders. War readies you to kill, to always be on guard, to trust no one who is the enemy.

War, then, almost always destroys the very sense of humanity that allows you to see yourself in another, to see your connection with another instead of their difference from you. Brutality reflects this process of seeing and then not seeing another's hu-



There is then a different context for seeing the disorder and chaos in Iraq that leaves many women barricaded in their homes fearing rape and capture if they venture onto the streets. It also puts a different lens on the recent charges of sexual assault and rape by dozens of U.S. servicewomen in the Persian Gulf area against their fellow soldiers. At least 112 reports of sexual misconduct have been filed by U.S. women soldiers in the past two years, 2002-2004, in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan. Exactly whose war is this? Why do the narratives of war take on the trajectories that they do? Why in the Balkan wars was the raping of women a central narrative demonizing Serb nationalism while the rape and sexual humiliation of Muslim male prisoners largely silenced? And, why, today is the central narrative Muslim men's humiliation while the violation of their women counterparts has been largely muted? Because today's militarist masculinism operates out of the enforced differentiation of woman from man through gender swapping, the 'othering' and differentiating of each through a hetero viewing of the self using white female decoys.

However, I also think that these silences enforce a disconnection and 'differentiation' between men and women that do not and cannot exist given the centrality of racialized/sexualized violence in war.

This shared dehumanization also bespeaks it's very opposite: men and women's shared humanity. Sex and race combine and reformulate here. Bodies are disconnected from their gendered meaning. Brown men become like women of all colors, yet it is white women who supposedly dominate and hold the leashes—the white women who are also raped by their comrades in arms.

Gender swapping and gender confusion becomes a decoy in these militarist moments so that real people cannot be seen for their humanity. As such, the structures of power and domination defining the contours of their lives are put out of view. Barbara Ehrenreich has argued that Abu Ghraib makes clear that feminism—the idea that women need to be free to have the same rights as men—is an insufficient strategy. Fair enough; but this in part misreads Abu Ghraib. She writes that Abu Ghraib is a moment of "imperial arrogance, sexual depravity and gender equality". But there is no gender equality to be seen here, just gender depravity, or at best a deformed equality that no one wishes for, and at this point, not even the women said to be equal.

Most feminisms around the globe, and many at home, know that mimicking men is not equality or freedom. Parallel issues are presented when Colin Powell and Condi Rice become the symbols for this war. One should not presume that their presence means that racial and/or gender equality exists today for most Black men and women. In reality, disproportionate numbers of Blacks—men and women—are housed in U.S. prisons; the same prisons that strip them naked and abuse them.

What is really scary is that Abu Ghraib can be made to look like feminism, but not any that I recognize. Abu Ghraib is hyper-imperialist/masculinity run amok.

Females are present to cover over the misogyny of building empire. So I think that there is little if anything to consider feminist here. Most women are in the military because of globalization, the restructuring of the labor force in the U.S., and their desire to get an education, and/or a job. Jessica Lynch had applied for a job at Wal-Mart and when she did not get it, she decided to enlist. Lori Piestewa and Shoshanna Johnson both who fought with Lynch were single mothers looking to get an education. The three women charged in the crimes at Abu Ghraib are all working class. I see necessity, not equality here. I want to be careful to not oversimplify the variety and differences that exist among soldiers in this war—especially in this case, women. Johnson, a Black woman soldier-cook was shot and taken as a P.O.W. and then was rescued to return home to her young daughter.

She says when she is asked about Lynndie England on the Larry King Show, "There is no way I would ever wrap a rope around someone's neck and drag them around naked. They could court-martial me, or do anything else they wanted to punish me. I wouldn't do it." She also said that no soldier should ever follow an inhumane order.

She also says that once captured she feared for her safety and the possibility of rape, but that she was always treated with respect after a beating on the battlefield. According to Jessica Lynch she also was treated with care and concern as a prisoner, although as implied in I Am A Soldier Too it seems that she was initially beaten and sexually abused. Despite her wrecked body, she refuses to demonize Iraq or become a voice for this war. Women are used in the Abu Ghraib pictorial narrative to protect a heterosexist normativity. We see women abusing men which protects sexual hierarchy and opposition but in re-

Inmate population increases

WASHINGTON - America's inmate population grew by 2.9 percent last year, to almost 2.1 million people, with one of every 75 men living in prison or jail.

The inmate population continued its rise despite a fall in the crime rate and many states' efforts to reduce some sentences, especially for low-level drug offenders.

The report, issued Thursday by the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics, attributes much of the increase to get-tough policies enacted in the 1980s and '90s, such as mandatory drug sentences, "three-strikes-and-you're-out" laws for repeat offenders, and "truth-in-sentencing" laws that restrict early releases.

Whether that's good or bad depends on who is asked.

"The prison system just grows like a weed in the yard," said Vincent Schiraldi, executive director of the Justice Policy Institute, which pushes for a more lenient system. Without reforms, he said, prison populations will continue to grow "almost as if they are on autopilot, regardless of their high costs and disappointing crime-control impact."

But Attorney General John Ashcroft said the report shows the success of efforts to take hard-core criminals off the streets.

"It is no accident that violent crime is at a 30-year low while prison population is up," Ashcroft said. "Violent and recidivist criminals are getting tough sentences while law-abiding Americans are enjoying unprecedented safety."

There were 715 inmates for every 100,000 U.S. residents at midyear in 2003, up from 703 a year earlier, the report found.

Missouri's prison population rose from 30,034 in June 2002 to 30,649 in June 2003. Kansas' prison population rose from 8,758 in June 2002 to 9,009 in June 2003.

The nation's incarceration rate tops the world, according to The Sentencing Project, another group that promotes alternatives to prison. That compares with a rate of 169 per 100,000 residents in Mexico and 143 for England and Wales.

Published on May 28, 2004, Page A20, The Kansas City (MO) Star

The number of inmates in state and federal prisons has increased more than six-fold from less than 200,00 in 1970 to 1,440,655 by the end of 2002. An additional 665,475 are held in local jails.

Bureau of Justice Statistics



There were 715 inmates for every 100,000 U.S. residents at midyear in 2003.

Bureau of Justice Statistics

THE CONFESSION OF A CONVICT

By Alexander Berkman

(The 19th of December, 1913, was "Confession evening" at the "Twilight Club", New York, among whose members are the "best" people, supreme court judges, and other pillars of society. "Confessions" were made by a drunkard, a dope fiend, an actress, a labor agitator, a convict, etc., some of whom spoke in complete darkness, to hide their identity.)

This is an evening of confession, and I therefore at once confess myself a lawbreaker, a criminal -- if you will -- and a convict.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, I beg your kind indulgence, for the convict's manner is uncouth, his speech ragged, his thoughts indecently naked. For only the convict, the outcast from the fold of commonplace respectability and dull conformity, can afford the luxury of frank, honest expression. And I should be honest with you -- not only because of my lack of respect for that which is respected but the general consensus of stupidity, but rather because I hold in high respect my fellow convicts the world over, and -- myself. And I make my confession, not in the protecting shadow of cowardly darkness, but in the full glare of the challenging light which defies all shame and hypocrisy, however generally revered, and which is neither afraid nor ashamed of anything that is human.

And the convict, the criminal, Ladies and Gentlemen, is human. So human, indeed, that one of your great ethical teachers was compelled to cry out: "I have within me the capacity for every crime". Nor do I believe that Emerson merely said this as an abandonment of generosity, with the desire of uttering something a great and leveling. I think he meant exactly what he said. For I believe that within every bit of human flesh and spirit that has ever crossed the enigma bridge of life, from the prehistoric racial morning until now, all crime and all virtue were germinal. Out of the same stuff are we sprung, you and I and all of us, and if perchance in you the virtue has grown and not the vice, do not therefore conclude that you are essentially different from him whom you have helped to put in stripes and behind bars. Your balance may be more even, you may be mixed in smaller proportions, or the outside temptation has not come upon you.

But has virtue really grown in you, and not vice? If the most respected and righteous among us, if our holiest and purist and better-than-thou pillars of church and state and society were for once to enter this confessional, in the frank abandon of their naked souls, would there be a single one left to cast and the first stone at the criminal and convict? Would there be any essential difference between the trust magnate and pick-pocket, except in the size of the booty they have stolen? Would there be any real difference between the great general or the judges on the criminal bench, and the ordinary murderer, except in the number of their victims? Would there be any difference between the employer of cheap labor or the Christian proprietor of a large department store, and the despicable creature we know has the cadet, except in the number of the girls they have forced into prostitution?

And whose crime is the greater -- that of the man who steals my pocketbook or that of respected captains of industry who weave the very flesh and blood of their starving slaves into the luxury and license of the master's life? Who is the real criminal, Ladies and Gentlemen? Is it the starving who occasionally steals a loaf of bread or burglarizes my house or is it he who is the eternal vampire on the body of labor, forever feeding on the bone and marrow of the worker, exploiting and oppressing him, always keeping him on the verge of starvation that he may exercise his benevolent charity upon him, and ultimately degrading him to the lowest depths.

Thus is society organized, you'll say. Yes, thus: that a handful of the masters of life vampire upon the whole people. And therefore I indict modern society, this unwholy union of authority and capital, I indict society as the greatest -- *aye, the only Criminal, the great universal crime that breeds and feeds the swamp of our whole social life with all its misery and degradation, all its evil and crimes. For what is ordinarily called crime is but starvation. Ninety percent of all lawbreaking is of an economic nature. But it is not lawbreaking that makes the criminal.*

"tortured" or "raped." The women I met with during the Bosnian war whom had been forced into the rape camps there were not described as humiliated, but rather, as raped. The choice of words is revealing. Men who are raped and sexually degraded are "humiliated" because they are treated like women; they are forced to be women--sexually dominated and degraded. Men who are naked and exposed remind us of the vulnerability usually associated with being a woman. The brown men at Abu Ghraib are then constructed as effeminate and narrate a sub-text of homosexuality.

When I first saw the pictures of the torture at Abu Ghraib I felt destroyed. Simply heart-broken. I thought "we are the fanatics, the extremists, not them." By the next day as I continued to think about Abu Ghraib I wondered how there could be so many women involved in the atrocities? These of the torturers--Megan Ambuhl, Lynndie England and Sabrina Harman--so key to the pictorial narrative--are white women. The Brig General in charge of the prisons in Iraq, Janis Karpinski is also a white woman. So is Maj. General Barbara Fast, the top U.S. Intelligence Officer who reviewed the status of detainees.

Condoleezza Rice, National Security Advisor to the President, complexities the picture as a Black woman. In contrast, the pictures of torture were of brown Muslim men. The reported but "unsubstantiated" abuse and rape of Muslim women prisoners by U.S. soldiers has remained largely silenced in the depictions of the torture at Abu Ghraib. Keep track of these points as I flesh out the rest of my argument. I hope to use both the racialized silences and the gender confusions in the Abu Ghraib narrative to better see this militarized moment as both unique and common. Abu Ghraib is a horrific exposure of what war is and does always; and what the "war on terror" at this particular juncture of unilateral militarized globalization looks like. I have more questions than I have answers just now. Why have women ended up in these specific locations of power while masculinism is at its height in this militarized and military moment? I am thinking that it is because these locations may be archetypic sites of power as the military has become more and more privatized and corporatized.

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld has downsized and restructured the military and maybe women have been allowed in just as these seats of institutionalized power are being demoted. It may be why it is so easy to locate the blame at these very sites. These

women should be held responsible and accountable; but they also are gender decoys. As decoys they create confusion by participating in the very sexual humiliation that their gender is usually victim to. This gender swapping and switching leaves masculinist/racialized gender in place. Just the sex has changed; the uniform remains the same. Male or female can be a masculinized commander, or imperial collaborator while white women look like masculinist empire builders and brown men look like women and homes. Whenever power and domination are exposed in their ugly form like at Abu Ghraib the embedded sexual and racialized meanings of power are revealed. Racism and sexism are always in play together because they each construct the other. When one is revealed the other is lying in wait. Salient examples of the hybrid relation between race, sex, and gender are the O.J. Simpson trial, the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings, the beatings of Rodney King and Abner Louima and their aftermaths. One was never sure if the issues were racialized sex or sexualized racism or whether they are ever truly separable. In the case of Abu Ghraib, racial codings are used to deeply seed gender meanings and their confusion to build empire. A man who is treated like a woman becomes less than human--not a white man--like the black slave woman, and not white woman. Muslim men, along with Jews and Semitic men of all religions are then viewed as not virile like white men. This is somewhat like the Black slave man who was forced to watch the rape of his lover or child by the master except the Black man is made "different" than the white man, in his hyper rather than homosexuality.

So the Black man is also lynched and mutilated/castrated. Males and/or females can adopt masculinist depravity, as a political discourse. It is all the more despicable that the Bush administration used the language of women's rights to justify the bombs in the Afghan war against Taliban practices towards women; and then again against the horrific torture and rape chambers under Saddam Hussein. And it should be no surprise that Bush's women--Laura, Mary Malinin, and Karen Hughes--who regularly bad-mouth feminism of any sort were responsible for articulating this imperial women's rights justification for war. Imperialist feminism obscures the use of gender decoys: women are both victims and perpetrators; constrained and yet free; neither exactly commander or decoy. What if rape and sexual humiliation are understood not as aberrations in war but as simply "a form of war by other means?"

produce? Why is there poverty in an age that technology can build lives? Why is there homelessness when we can build tenements that can reach the heavens? Why is there a lack of education when we have an over-abundance of teachers and scholars and professors? Why are there so many wars in these times of so much talk of peace? Why are the majority of people of color dying in their own hands, which have been practically taken away from them? Why are there 36 million people on this planet infected with AIDS and 26 million of them are in Africa alone? Why is there so much oppression under the humanitarian guise of those who call themselves the world police? Why are those who swore to protect us shooting kids in our neighborhoods in the back?

The ANSWER lies in the type of system that we exist in, called CAPITALISM. If you are not part of the solution, they you are being part of the problem. That is why Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said: "We will not only have to repent for the hateful actions of the bad people, but also for the appalling silence of the good people." All you good whites and good people of color who see all this rampant exploitation, imprisonment, oppression, racism, genocide, colonialization, capitalism and imperialism that is euphemistically called "globalization" and do nothing about it: you are just as guilty as those who actively take part in these crimes against humanity. Your silence is approval that is motivated by self-interest and selfishness. What affects one of us directly is, in fact, affecting all of us indirectly! So you are either directly or indirectly helping in the destructive course this world has taken. For evil to triumph, the good people must only do nothing, as many of you are doing.

Seek change. Act now. Don't be a part of the problem. Be part of the solution.

For more information, go to the website:

www.alliedresistance.org/blaze

Jose "Blaze" Cruz #10456-074

U.S. Prison

PO Box 1000

Leavenworth, KS 66048

Black males have a 32% chance of serving time in prison at some point in their lives; Hispanic males have a 17% chance; white males have a 6% chance.

Bureau of Justice Statistics



Sexual Humiliation, Gender Confusion and the Horrors at Abu Ghraib by Zillah Eisenstein, June 22, 2004

Bush's "war of on terror" masks its realpolitik—that of a racist capitalist misogyny operating in drag for unilateral empire building. In the case of Abu Ghraib, racial codings are used to deeply seed gender meanings and their confusion to build empire. These women should be held responsible and accountable; but they also are gender decoys. As decoys they create confusion by participating in the very sexual humiliation that their gender is usually victim to. This gender swapping and switching leaves masculinist/racialized gender in place. Just the sex has changed; the uniform remains the same. Male or female can be a masculinized commander, or imperial collaborator while white women look like masculinist empire builders and brown men domination are exposed in their ugly form like at Abu Ghraib the embedded sexual and racialized meanings of power are revealed. A man who is treated like a woman becomes less than human—not a white man—like the black slave woman, and not white women.

The New York Times reports that there have been new releases of prisoners formerly held at Abu Ghraib. The photo shows a young man, age 17, being embraced by his mother and sisters. His body completely slumps into their protective arms. He is two years younger than my daughter. I am heart sick wondering if he will ever recover from his horror.

Muslim men are described as sexually humiliated at Abu Ghraib. And white women of the working class are used to "pussy whip" Muslim men. I keep wondering about the significance of this dyad. I am struck by the use of the phrase "humiliated" rather than

For as Oscar Wilde aptly said, "You may keep the law, and yet be worthless. You may break the law and yet be fine." It is starvation that fills our prisons. It is our wrong and unjust economic conditions that are the source of fully nine-tenths of all crime. And as to the other tenth, - though a crime may not be against property, it may spring from misery and rage and depression produced by our perverted social conditions. Jealousy, itself, an extraordinary source of crime in modern life, is an emotion closely bound up with our conceptions of property. Abolish private property and the social robbery it involves, and you will have abolished the chief fountainhead of all crime and the spirit that generates it in human society.

And now, as to the criminal in our prisons and penitentiaries. Why, do you know, he is not to be found there. There you will indeed find men convicted of offenses against the law; but the real, bigger criminals, - they are the large fish that break through the net of the law which is built to catch only the little fry.

The species "criminal" is a fiction of uncritical prejudice that deals only with theories, with imaginary abnormalities and aberrations. Through the obscure spectacles of preconceived notion and stubborn narrow-mindedness, men of the Lombroso stamp see only the "criminal species", entirely blind to the conception of crime as a social phenomenon, blind to the fact that the criminal, as an individual, is a unit of the larger species Man. The so-called criminal is not a little drop outside the ocean of life. He is one of us; his crime but the feverish pulse beat of our sick social body.

The theory of the criminal species is at best but a cheap salve for the guilty social conscience. I suspect that if a good many respectable, decent, never-did-a-wrong-thing-in-their-lives people were to undergo the measurement test offered to the so-called "born criminal," malformed ears and disproportionately long thumbs would be equally found among them, if they took the precaution to represent themselves as criminals first. I speak from experience. In my close association with criminals during fourteen years, in daily and hourly contact, not as an outsider, but as an equal - I have come to know them well and intimately. When I first came in touch with them, I entertained the idea of the criminal type, the species "criminal," a classification very much beloved by our prison reformists and criminologists. But closer contact and better understanding dispelled the fiction of the species and revealed the man, the individual, behind the convict.

There is no criminal type. In fact, the so-called criminal and convict is far more individualized, far more of a distinct personality than the average stupid citizen. He possesses a certain amount of initiative, considerable daring and independence of thought and action - traits, which, you will agree with me, are not the common earmarks of the average man. I have found no criminal type, but what I did find is that there are two classes of victims - the accidental and the professional. The accidental victim is the criminal by accident, one who has committed a crime as a result of some unusual combination of circumstances. The professional, on the other hand, is the one who follows crime as the ordinary pursuit of his life, similarly as the business man follows his profession of "stealing an honest living."

The line between these two classes is not drawn sharply nor is it a definite one. Very often the accidental victim, because of his prison experience and all it involves, is forced into the ranks of the professional. Now, what happens to the men who get into prison? What do we do to them? Do we try to call out their better nature by humane and kind treatment? Oh, no! My time is too limited to permit me to dwell on this matter, but everyone even slightly familiar with conditions in our penal institutions is aware that the whole system is built on the principle of revenge, of brutal humiliation and barbarous punishment. I need only refer to the blackjacks, the whips, the bulling, the water cure, to give you an idea of the spirit dominant in those institutions. And no wonder. For the prison in the last analysis is the mirror of society at large, the perfect model of our social arrangement whose cornerstone is hypocrisy, deceit, oppression and injustice. Punishment is degrading, even more to the one wielding the whip than to his victim. The history of crime clearly demonstrates that the more punishment is inflicted, the more crime is produced. And after you have tortured the poor convict for several years, degraded him to the lowest, broken him in body and spirit, you turn him out into a cold world without money or friends, and with the stigma of "convict" burned into his very soul. Having embittered and demoralized him to the verge of desperation, you demand that he become a good and useful citizen.

Is it any wonder, then, that your prisons have proved to be veritable hot-houses of crime — for what is the ex-convict to do, with every one an Ishmael against him?

Your good police and detective departments will see to it that the ex-convict shall get no show. He will be speedily arrested on one pretext or another, and a kind Christian judge will decree that he be put away for a long term of years, for is it not his second offence?

Let us be done with all this sham and hypocrisy. Let us admit once for all that crime is social: that our wrong economic conditions, by enriching the few at the cost of the many, are the true and only sources of crime. And let us emancipate ourselves from the stupid notion that the criminal is a being different or apart from the rest of us. There is no need of holding our skirts that he may not contaminate us. Indeed it is we who contaminate the criminal; it is we, society at large, that are guilty of far greater and more terrible crimes against the criminal than he has ever committed against us. In justice to him, and to ourselves, primarily, let us be honest, and brave enough to look the facts in the face; and if we are sincere in this matter, if we really and truly want to do away with the criminal and the convict, let us eradicate the causes of crime, rather than try hypocritically to patch up and hide our social sores.

The first step in reforming the criminal is to reform ourselves, for he is our brother, of the same blood and flesh. A more enlightened social attitude toward crime and criminals will serve to humanize, to some extent, our penal institutions, and will inject a little of the milk of kindness into the bitter cup of the convict. And the next step is to treat the cause instead of the effect.

When you cease to justify and maintain present conditions of capitalistic exploitation and governmental oppression, and all other institutions based upon man's inhumanity to man, when honest men will realize their solidarity with the aspirations of labor for complete emancipation from all bondage, when M A N will at last awaken from his nightmare of private ownership, of punishment and authority, then will crime and criminals forever disappear and make this earth fit for decent men and women to live in.



ship dues, so donations are essential to our success. That's OUR success; your and ours! Together we can force the changes to our social structure that are so desperately needed in order to serve the greater and common good of all. At present only a selfish, abusive few actually live. The rest of us merely exist. Answer the immediate need for your financial assistance by sending your contributions by Western Union directly to me or by mail to:

ARISE
c/o Kansas Mutual Aid
PO Box 442318
Lawrence, KS 66041

I've purposefully omitted reference to myself as an individual because the battle that we are all engaged in goes far beyond myself, or any other, as an individual. This is a life and death struggle for us all! However, if you have any questions concerning myself or ARISE, you can pose your queries to me directly. All shall be responded to as soon as funds permit. There are no secrets or hidden agendas with myself or ARISE. As you are pondering whether or not you should contact or unite with ARISE, think of this: part of myself and ARISE has always existed within you, lying dormant within the depths of your heart, awaiting the opportunity to express itself. That opportunity is now upon you. ARISE! ARISE! ARISE!

We ask that once you have read this message, please make three copies to pass on to three other, even if you feel there's little or no chance that they'd be interested in hearing the truths and possibilities behind this message.

Some people are anxiously awaiting to hear the unadorned truth spoken in order to be able to express what truly lies within their hearts. ARISE doesn't speak or act for myself alone, it speaks and acts for us all! Whatever you decide for yourself personally, know that I am always with you, in spirit and in deed.

In Solidarity, Strength, & Love,
Timothy Alphonso Jones, #505163 HU JB-11
Potosi Correctional Center
11593 State Highway O
Mineral Point, MO 65660-9600



Signs of Capitalism In Our Times, and the Only Solution

Some of the signs of the Capitalist of our time are that they have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways but narrower viewpoints.

They spend more but have less; they buy more but enjoy less.

They have bigger houses and smaller families; more convenience but less time; they have more degrees but less sense; more knowledge but less judgment; more experts, yet more problems; more medicine but less wellness.

They drink too much and smoke too much; spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch T.V. too much and use critical thinking too seldom.

They have multiplied their possessions but reduced their values.

They talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.

They have learned how to make a living, but not a life; they have added years to life but not life to years.

They have been all the way to the moon and back but they have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor.

They have conquered outer space but not inner space.

They have done larger things but not better things.

They have hundreds of cleaning commercials but have polluted their environment and souls.

They have conquered the atom but not their prejudices.

They write more but learn less.

They learned to rush but not to wait.

They build more computers to hold more information to produce more Copecks then ever but they communicate less and less.

They plan more but accomplish less.

These are the capitalist times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships.

These are the capitalist times of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses but broken homes.

These are the capitalist times of quick trips, disposable diapers, throw-away morality, one-night stands, over weight bodies and pills that do everything from cheer to quiet to kill.

You do not have to be a part of these capitalist times of depravity. You can do self-criticism and start making a socialist change, starting with yourself and expanding this change to influence the environment and people around you. You can easily find the solution by studying and learning about the social ills that taint our society. Seek out the answers to:

Why is there hunger when we have the ability to mass-

the common good of all, if given an unrestrained opportunity to cultivate their potential. For those of us who believe that, our numbers alone give us the strength to be victorious in seeing that such a future will come to be. To realize the truth of that possibility, all that is required of us is that we quit allowing ourselves to be fractionalized by meaningless prejudices and self-serving interests, so that our hearts will begin to beat as one, our voices speak as one, and our actions become as one united effort.

It's not necessary that we all be in 100% agreement with all of our allies on every issue. What is essential is that we recognize that we share a common foe and that regardless of the differences we may have among ourselves, none of those differences are as great or destructive as the effects from the differences we share against a common enemy. It's time to awaken to the truth and ARISE!

As long as there has been contention between Governments and Anarchists, many of those who are anarchists at heart have been branded criminals and either slain or imprisoned—not because they are criminally minded, but because they have sought ways to express their resistance to an overly oppressive and abusive system that is enacted by Corporate America and enforced by the American Government. I'd be the first to admit that, in our confused state of mind resulting from such concentrated levels of oppression, abuse, and outright denial of humane treatment, we have struck out blindly and brought about great harm to ourselves and those that we should be united with as allies. We are all suffering and victimized by the same enemy. It's now time to end all that sort of self-destruction and ARISE as one! End it all in its forms: those acts that cause victims to victimize victims, and those acts that cause us to separate ourselves into individuals and individual groups with separate agendas. If we search out the root causes of why we are so segmented and self-destructive, at the core we'd find but one beast—the beast of Government and Corporate America's manipulations. It is that beast that we should righteously be embattled against, and it is time for us to ARISE as one and be so embattled. It's time to stop all the abandonment when we should try being more supportive, criticizing when we should try at being more understanding, hating when we really need to be loving. Supporting, understanding, loving—those are the traits that can turn a faint heart into a strong heart; give a confused mind constructive purpose; and also unite deeply committed, very loyal allies. If we can just get beyond our selves and ARISE as one, there's no way that we can be deterred from our objectives! We need not continue existing as the hapless, endless victims. ARISE!

This is ARISE's objective: uniting all as one so that we can meet our common enemy as one mighty force! ARISE hopes to bridge the great void which

separates those on the inside of prisons from those on the outside. This void is caused by lack of communication, which has evolved into a great lack of appreciation of one another and is very self-destructive to us all. We hope to put into practice several means, effective immediately! At this very moment we are working on the first edition of a prison newsletter which will expose the truth of what it's like to be victimized by Corporate and Government America, followed by its judiciary, as a means of silencing voices of protest against their wending abuses and cruelties. We'll be printing actual case histories, supported by their documentation. Those truths can be very revealing to those who have not had a personal experience with the American Judiciary. That's why such great effort is put into keeping such truths concealed from the public's scrutiny. It is hoped that such revelations will prove to be a great asset to bridging the gulf that separates those on the inside of prison walls from those on the outside. Understanding goes a long way when all parties involved are at least trying to understand one another. A mind is indeed a terrible thing to waste, but it is even more terrible to subject it to relentless abuse. We'll be printing legal citations, court rulings, and prison policies and procedure which have no other design than to subject prisoners to the most dehumanizing conditions and degradations as possible, without benefit of judicial redress. Today it is us, tomorrow it could just as easily be you or someone that you love dearly. Everyone has a breaking point, some just break more quickly and easily than others.

ARISE is not designed as a prisoners' effort alone. We hope that people from every walk of life who also believe that everyone should be free of woman abuse and neglect shall join in this community effort. As we strive toward success, we hope to provide shelters for the homeless, food and clothing for the needy, and to help with the education of minds and uplifting of spirits, among other things. We're striving to do our part in ensuring that everyone is able to envision a future other than one of abject misery, endless suffering, or imprisonment. ARISE has many objectives, but we can only succeed if we ARISE as one!

If you feel that these are your objectives as well, whether in part or entirety, unite with ARISE. Step with us into what shall be a greater and victorious future for us all. If you feel that you can enlighten us to a great understanding, communicate and share those views with ARISE. Even if you feel that you have cause to hate or despise us even though we share a common enemy who is more damaging to us than we could ever be to each other, relate your opinions to ARISE. All thought, opinions, and assistance are welcome. You can contact us through www.allselfresistance.org or by mailing me directly.

ALL are welcome and very much needed! No opinion or voice is too small or great. ARISE with us and we can achieve the goals that so many of us struggle and sacrifice so greatly for. ARISE does not demand member-

An Incarcerated Woman's Point of View

Valley State Prison for Women is one of the newer California women's prisons. Housed here are all levels of custody. Approximately 3,000 reside in this community of incarcerated women. In general, women are more inclined to follow instruction and direction. The greater number of women that come to prison possess dreams of becoming self-sufficient individuals rather than being dependent on society or on the system in which they now live. Unfortunately, most have not had the opportunity to learn a better way. In view of the statistics, in addition to factors such as abuse, alcoholism, substance abuse, and poor parental guidance, many of these women have not had role models to teach them positive aspects of living a responsible and respectable lifestyle. They have little insight about possessing a positive image. I do not believe that incarcerated women lack desire; rather, they lack knowledge.

According to an internet article by prisonactivist.org, over 90,000 women are incarcerated in the United States today—the majority for drug use and economic crimes. The most typical convictions resulting in imprisonment or women are drug use and property crimes, such as check forgery and illegal credit card use. Over 80% of women in prison report incomes of less than \$2,000 in the year before their arrest, and 92% report incomes under \$10,000. The profile that emerges in study after study is that of a young, single mother with few marketable job skills, a high school dropout who lives below the poverty level. Seventy-five percent are between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-four. The majority of incarcerated women are mothers of dependent children and were unemployed at the time of arrest. Many left home early and have experienced sexual and physical abuse along with drug and alcohol abuse.

Some of these women are anxious and eager to prove themselves. Our capabilities and potential have been characterized and damaged by past situations which color other's ideas as well as our own. Unfortunately, we often lack the ability to see a better and brighter future for ourselves. With motivation and instruction, we can overcome these obstacles. Few incarcerated women have recourse to benefit from a positive influence in their lives.

In a recent Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) survey taken at Valley State Prison in the Education Department, the average inmate is be-

tween 24-45. Of the inmates surveyed, only 24% were high school graduates. It is important to note that there are many incarcerated women here who have successfully completed education programs. These women have worked hard to accomplish their goals. Many have earned their GED's and have received vocational training. These women work diligently toward future goals. Unfortunately, this is a small percentage. There are 93% who need job placement assistance. Even after receiving vocational training, many have no idea how to find a job. Seventy-one percent are interested in attending classes that address such issues as substance abuse, anger management, self-esteem, and breaking the cycle of violence.

A feeling of low self-worth should not keep any woman from realizing her true potential. Lack of available space or funds should not be an issue. With so many resources in the world today, I believe we should utilize any person with an interest to help incarcerated women. Many of these women will be returning home, and in many cases will be the sole support and influence over their children. It seems sensible to make an effort toward incarcerated women.

Public awareness is growing and society is realizing it is less costly and more effective to educate and treat rather than imprison people for long periods of time. California prisons house the largest number of incarcerated women in the world. Most of these women are mothers. According to the WASC Valley State Adult School student survey results, 49% of the women are single; 83% of these women are mothers. This means more children will be supported by tax dollars because many women who parole from prison will have few marketable skills.

When the WASC survey asked about classes that would be helpful to incarcerated women in the future, 71% stated that they needed the basics of home economics and culinary. This high percentage gives insight into the incarcerated single mother who has limited skills. In other words, of the 3,000 incarcerated women at VSPW, 2,130 indicate that they need instruction in home economics and culinary skills. I believe this gives us insight into these women's limited knowledge of managing a household.

I believe there is a solution to this problem. If we put forth effort to educate beyond the basic skills offered, we can get inmates to become more involved. I believe if we show these women a better way, they will change. I believe that ideas are important, words are important, and the helpful action of one person can change the life of another.

"We are not troubled by people or things but by the options which we hold of them."—Epictetus

Most of society's impressions are built around fear and misunderstanding of women who are ready and willing for change. It is a fact that individuals develop through interaction. Without interaction from positive people with positive skills, values, and beliefs, many of these women will not know they have a way out. The idea "If you look a person up they will see the error of their ways," may be true for some, but most have not had a positive influence and may lack ability to excel without first being taught.

I believe there are people all over the world who could use positive self-esteem. I believe helping incarcerated women should be a high priority because these women have issues most could only imagine. A great percentage are mothers and grandmothers who will always have an influence over a younger generation. The women serving time in prison were not born immoral, corrupt or criminal. They made bad choices, some with rationale to understand, some without! They are mothers, daughters, sisters, and yes, grandmothers. Incarcerated women spend so much time cut off from the outside world. It is easy to lose one's self-worth and all hope for a brighter future. It is very hard to focus on the positive when you only see negative! Prison was not designed to be easy and we do not expect favoritism or special treatment; we simply hope to shed light on our situation. We ask that society not disregard us or our attempts toward change.

To open the eyes of the greater community, we must first impress upon them the benefits of what we can accomplish given the opportunity of motivation, self-esteem, and a belief that we are capable human beings. Even those incarcerated have something to contribute!

Please keep in mind, I am an inmate here at VSPW and this is my first endeavor. I hope I have given you insight into our plight. I offer these words as a tool of understanding, not justification or reasons for pity. Incarcerated women do not need pity. We need to realize that change is possible.

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Rhonda Leland W#62446

Valley State Prison for Women C-3-1-4low
 P. O. Box 92

Chowchilla, CA 93610-0092



Thank You, DOC

Anger is the gift you gave me
 Hate is what I have for you
 Bitter tears of frustration
 Hardened what was left of my heart.

Contempt and loathing are my only friends
 Your lies brought us close
 Pain has slurred my focus
 Rage feeds the tempest within.

Was this in your plan for me?
 Can you see what I've become?
 You've created a monster
 And I'm not the only one.

Unfeeling warriors
 Turned loose on the streets
 Uncaring open wounds
 Paroling soon...to a neighborhood near you.

Laura Mace
 Paroled Spring 2004
 from Coffee Creek Correctional Facility
 in Wilsonville, OR

Uncle Sam

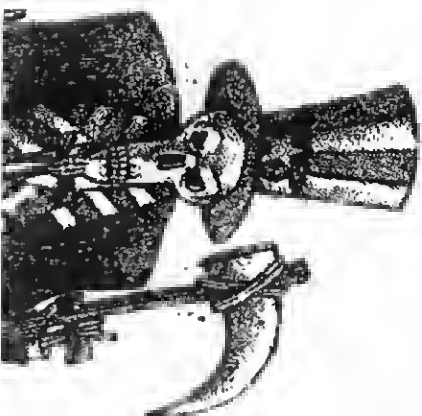
There was once a man who was proud and glad,
 But now he is sour and his thoughts are bad.
 This man I speak of wears red, white, and blue,
 Sticks out his finger and says, "I want you!"

Uncle Sam, who the fuck are you
 and what the fuck are you trying to do?
 You build these weapons of war,
 And you do not feed the poor.
 Your greed will be your demise.
 Can you see the revolution in my eyes?
 Youth will be our weapon,
 so make it right or start sleepin'.

Fuck you and what you stand for
 because we the people won't take it anymore.
 This is our country,
 land of the free,
 so who in the fuck are you
 to dictate to me.
 mother fucker!

This is the home of the brave
 and before we let you take control,
 we will go to the grave.
 We will fight for the right to be free.
 Maybe you want some good old Boston tea.

Benjamin L. Holitt
 #863243 DW 431
 Indiana State Prison
 P. O. Box 41
 Michigan City, IN 46361-0041



ARISE Allied Resistance in Social Enslavement

Soldiers, Comrades, & Potential Allies:

I beseech you to give these words of mine deep consideration and action. Due to my being incarcerated, I am unable to speak to you directly, so others must give voice to my words and spread the message of the convictions that beat within my heart. I'm not sure who all is gathered here, nor the convictions which lie within you, but I am convinced that if you strip away all the superficial coverings which cloud our thoughts and distort our judgment, at the core we'd find but one heartbeat—one conviction, something that is in sync not only among all of us, but also in unison with so many others all throughout this Nation. In our heart we know that Government and Corporate America do not represent the best interests of the majority; they serve the greed and self-interest of a very select few. While we fragment ourselves into selective individuals, groups, and organizations, Government and Corporate America steadily solidify their power and control over every aspect of our lives through collective effort among themselves. If we continue to allow this to go on unchallenged by a collective effort on our part as well, it will either destroy us all individually or convert us into unconscious puppets that are used, abused, and then discarded as waste. Government and Corporate America do not care what forms of havoc and destruction are wreaked upon lives that are left in the wake of their greedy, self-serving actions, and I do not believe that is the sort of life that we wish to continue to have forced upon us or left for the generations of children after us.

Ever since the forming of Governments, which have dictated that a very few should have absolute authority and control over the lives of the majority of the population, Anarchists have been in the shadows, resisting Government corruption and all manner of abuses that it inflicts upon the masses. For just as long, the Anarchists of the world have been branded criminals and subjected to even greater abuses and degradations for their unwavering belief that all people, regardless of the hierarchy and background, deserve humane treatment and consideration. That's something that Government and Corporate America firmly disagree with because it cuts into their range of influence and control over others, which serves to line their greedy pockets and nurture their lust for power. Humane treatment is an invariable, inherent right everyone is entitled to which should not be infringed upon or denied to anyone by another or others. As long as we continue to think of ourselves as inferior and act as if we should be treated as inferior as a result of being programmed into believing that we are weak and inferior beings, we shall always be preyed upon and victimized by those who think of themselves as superior beings.

We are neither weak nor inferior. All are capable of mighty things that could prove to be a great asset to

Surviving Abuse Inside Oregon's Prisons

I am currently in the Coffee Creek Facility minimum side and when I read the last Break the Chains newsletter I felt compelled to write about a topic I believe in passionately and have experience with in the DOC prisons.

First, a brief explanation of my history. This is my 4th prison set in Oregon beginning in 1990 and again in 1991, both for 6 months. Then, a visit of 30 days in '95, but this last set of 103 months has opened my eyes to the failure they call rehabilitation of prisoners.

I am a survivor of sexual abuse—17 years of it to be exact and have never been in any counseling. Due to this history, of course, I became a drug addict, criminal and prisoner. Never in all my attempts to receive some sort of counseling within DOC have I been heard. The only group offered was a "Christian" group with a chaplain at EOCH (Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution). I am far from Christian. (That is also another subject I feel passionately about—discrimination of religious beliefs in DOC.)

Well, I have been asking questions why there are no groups for survivors of abuse (domestic/sexual) and was informed by a volunteer who does a spiritual group that DOC doesn't want to open a can of worms!! OK, so our emotional issues, which, in fact are the core of who we are, should not be breached or discussed! No, give them pills, make them numb, that's all DOC does. I know for me if I do not tackle those issues, I'll return to the drugs and soon be insane.

I only hope that all the women and men of corrections can learn how to cope with abuse issues on their own because as I see it DOC has no intentions of helping us. Turning Point is a joke!! They do not even delve into abuse issues.

Back in '90, I was untreatable by T.P. because of my sexual history! What the hell? My history is who I am! Well, I ask other persons out there: have you been wondering why there's not counseling or groups for survivors? I have asked over and over for 6 years with NOTHING OFFERED.

I believe women and men both deserve to acknowledge their abuse history and to deal with it on a safe level while we're in here. Isn't that what DOC claims to help us be: persons able to return to society better? It's a laugh to believe anyone who needs help gets it in here. I, for one, believe the abuse needs acknowledgment if nothing else.

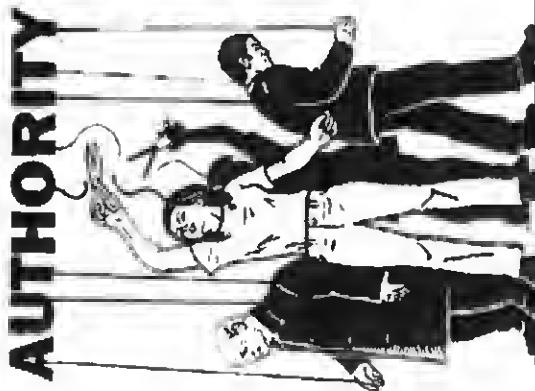
Are there any non-Christian groups being offered anywhere in ODOC? If so, please send info for CCCF.

The CTS groups don't QUALIFY! Keep up the fight, be real and stand proud.

Tori Nevarez
#7239313
P. O. Box 9000
Wilsonville, OR 97070

This essay was originally published in the newsletter of the Break the Chains prisoner support group—Issue #18 Spring 2004. For more information about Break the Chains contact them at P. O. Box 12122 Eugene, OR 97440

Let's cut ourselves free from



More than half of the women in state prisons have been abused, 47% physically abused and 39% sexually abused (with many being survivors of both types of abuse).

Bureau of Justice Statistics

Inmate in the Stone Hotel

I encounter a lot of trite crap posing as poetry. Often I read or hear poems that are so bad I squirm in embarrassment on behalf of the author. Having been subjected to many poorly contrived pieces, I was surprised and exhilarated when I began reading *Stone Hotel: Poems From Prison* by Raegan Butcher. I was sucked in, immediately hooked by the dramatic pictures painted by Butcher—often in few words, but always in vivid detail.

Butcher uses his words to tell stories of his life, starting with the armed robbery he was convicted for in 1996. He takes his audience through his arrest, the suicide watch he's placed on, the mental ward he's confined to, his conviction, and his transfer to prison. The last line of "Prisonbound" reads, "I had 2,555 days to go." In addition to details of those 2,555 days, the book's next 86 pages are filled with Butcher's hopes, dreams, fears, and desires.

I particularly appreciate Butcher's straight-up honesty. He manages to write about his love for his young daughter and of romance lost without seeming sappy or fake. Whether writing about strip searches ("designed to humiliate/ dehumanize/ demoralize and intimidate") or self-gratification ("nasturbate/ 3 times/ in 20 minutes/ the last/ orgasm/ just a day/ spasms/ in a cramped land"), he doesn't sugarcoat or pretend. My favorite pieces are his brief and pointed descriptions of inmates he encounters. These poems are as short as eleven words, but they speak volumes nonetheless. Butcher makes each word count.

This book illuminates a skill and talent that goes beyond sharing the details of life in prison, although (according to my friends behind bars) Butcher does that well. The greatest beauty here is that Butcher puts words together in ways that shock and delight. Consider the final words of the final poem in *Stone Hotel*: "I've walked thru hell/ wearing gasoline shoes." That's a whole world of meaning in only ten syllables.

Stone Hotel can be purchased for \$10 (including postage) by sending well-concealed cash or a money order to Crimethink, Felonius Monks P. O. Box 1963 Olympia, WA 98507

Chantel G.

dimestore dillinger

hard time
for armed crime
isn't just
a politician's sound bite
i did 7 years in prison
i don't need to be forgiven

With eyes
like traffic lights
and a spine
like a cork-screw

i've walked thru hell
wearing gasoline shoes

april 7th 1998

walked the yard
alone
it rained for a minute
or two

the smell of the rain
on the pavement

brought memories
of the summer of '93

when I lived
with my girlfriend and child
on Casino road
until things went bad

Regret and lost love and
missed opportunities
crunching under my shoes

the hard dollar

prison
is hardly
the free ride
it's perceived to be
from out
on the streets.

they make us pay
for everything
including
room and board.

i thought
i had escaped
the tyranny
of the timeclock
but prison
is just like

the free world:
everyone is hustling
for the hard dollar.

For My Friends

I have some friends
On the dark side of this rock
That no matter how much I've been beaten,
How severe my head's been knocked,
They've been there for me.

They say blood is thicker than water.
In a relative way that may be true.
But how many of you can honestly say
That a friend has not been there for you?
They've been there for me.

Been there for me when no one else was,
Held my hand as I lay in my blood,
Wiped my tears when the hurt and the fears
Took everything from me, 'cept love of my peers.
They've been there for me.

Though I've been bloodied,
I'm yet unbowed,
Thanks to the strength that my friends have endowed.
And since I am king wherever I be,
I fight for justice and to be free and for my friends,
Because I love you ...
They've been there for me.

Jose "Blaze" Cruz 10465-071,
U.S. Prison
P.O. Box 1000
Leavenworth, KS 66048



X-Scape Dis Matrix

The pain in my world is an illusion
A matrix caused by the dilution of the devil's tricks
My mind is polluted
My impure thoughts is like a crown of thorns
From inside out they manifest handouts on my
wrists and shackles on my feet
Tied to the cross of Amerikkka's system of tyranny
I'm caught in a web of laws contrary to my nature of
survival
I'm forced to believe what I don't
Forgive me if I'm wrong, but no man is going to
come from the sky to save us
I can't grasp that concept
It's not tangible

I "BELIEVE" THAT TRUE THINGS ARE
Those Humble Under God Self
because I am the only man that can save me
And on my journey I'll do what I can to help you
because you without me and me without you wouldn't be
in other words, the only reason that everything in your
world exists is
because you do.
EVEN the Sun and Moon
Start... it is you that I see when I look at me
it's the UN.I..VERSE, I.N.U. Reversed, one universe
sees equality
Unity is the key to our Freedom from this Matrix Society.

Jonathan Kice #1099298
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A Conspiracy Behind Every Bush

It is difficult to imagine a family more victim-
ized by ceaseless, scandalous conspiracies than the
Bushes. Our noble First Family, given by God to de-
fine evil itself, cannot possibly be criminals.

When Director of CIA, many believe George
Bush, Sr. had heads of State and others he personally
defined as Enemies executed by his agents without ar-
rest or trial. However, only those who conspire against
Bushes can call this cold-blooded murder. Like Caesar
and Hitler, the Bush Family have a divine right to ex-
ecute anyone they dislike.

George, Sr. certainly created dossiers of black-
mail material on every American politician and busi-
ness executive so his children would inherit limitless
support and an obedient media. Only those who con-
spire against the Bushes call
this extortion, terrorism, and
deliberate manipulation of truth.

As Governors of Texas
and Florida, the two Bush
brothers together executed more
Americans than Al Capone.
They showed mercy for no one.
That many of these were later
proven by DNA and other
means to be innocent of the
crime are facts collected by
those conspiring to discredit the
noble Bush family. GW Bush
even stated his conscience is not
bothered one bit.

According to the *New
York Times* and *The New Yorker*
magazine, evidence that Gov.
Jeb Bush criminally rigged a
national election is absolutely
overwhelming. No question
that he is the worst criminal in
US history since Benedict Arnold. Are Bushes mere
commoners to be prosecuted like any other criminal?
Of course not. Their shit cannot stink. They are Amer-
ica's living Gods with spies everywhere.

Job Bush's daughter got ten days for crack co-
caine. Yet no pardons have been issued for those serv-
ing longer sentences for the same thing. Others are
merely Americans. There is one law for Bushes and
another for the commoners they manipulate, abuse,
stuff in prisons, and disenfranchise from voting for any
opponent.



It is now known that in June 2001 the Bush
government told India that it planned to invade Af-
ghanistan in October. In July, it told the Pakistan
government the same thing, seeking bases to support
the attack. Next, the president's financial backers
began dumping airline stock two weeks before the
9/11 attack.

Only those conspiring against our Fearless
Leader would conclude that the 9/11 attack was
planned because at that time GW Bush had the low-
est popularity of any President in history and needed
a war to get people's minds off having rigged his
election.

Then there are those who believe the planes
crashing into the WTC were CIA drones. They
point to the unscored passport
floating to the feet of a Bush agent
waiting below the tower which iden-
tified the hijacker pilot. They also
point to the odd manner of implosion
which demolished the structures,
saying that a plane could not cause
that. Obviously, these are demented
idiots conspiring to give Bush a bad
reputation.

Bush opposes evil-doers, but
oddly refuses to ratify the Interna-
tional Criminal Court Treaty. Some
conspirators claim he fears his own
prosecution.

Next came the Iraq War.
They were supposed to have weap-
ons of mass destruction. That, and
nothing else, was the official justifi-
cation for the bloodshed. Well, they
had two SKUD missiles, a very unre-
liable weapon which rarely explodes
and can be shot down by a helicopt-
ter. Maybe a flyswatter. Old German VIs were
deadlier. Anyway, no poison gas, no biological
weapons, nothing capable of mass destruction was
found by Caesar's conquering Legions.

No doubt some evil-doer conspirator hid all
Hussein's weapons just to make President Bush look
bad.

No wonder
people find a conspir-
acy behind every
Bush.
Richard Giffen OV01102
SCI
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Bushnell, FL 33513